

Anirudh Suri

# A Bright Future in Foreign Affairs

An Interview by ASHISH KUMAR SEN



**A**nirudh Suri, of New Delhi, has won the Carnegie Endowment Junior Fellowship for 2006 and during the next year will work at the Washington think tank with Ashley Tellis, a senior associate in the institute's South Asia program and former adviser to Undersecretary of State R. Nicholas Burns and to Ambassador Robert Blackwill in New Delhi.

Suri, 22, graduated in May with bachelor's degrees in economics and political science from Haverford College, where he was captain of the debate and cricket teams. His academic excellence and leadership achievements have brought several honors, including from the New York-based Goldman Sachs Foundation, which named him one of the 100 Global Leaders in 2004. Suri is founder-president of the International Students' Association and aims to join the Indian Foreign Service, he told SPAN in an interview.

## What got you interested in the Indian Foreign Service?

At Haverford College, I pursued a couple of summer internships that cemented my interest in foreign policy related careers. In my freshman year, I spent the summer in Kashmir, studying the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan. The next summer, I interned at the Carnegie

Endowment for International Peace, and worked on Pakistan-related issues, as well as India-China military balance issues. Last summer, I traveled to China, where I conducted research at a foreign policy think tank in Beijing to better understand the direction in which India-China and U.S.-China relations were headed.

All these experiences were incredibly exciting to me, and helped me realize that it was indeed foreign policy issues that I was really passionate about. I developed a knack for understanding foreign policy decisions and developments around the world, and had a vision for where Indian foreign policy should be headed as well.

## What subjects will you handle at the Carnegie Endowment?

A study of the military balance between India, Pakistan and China; the role of missile defense in Asia; democratization and demilitarization in Pakistan; the Iran issue; India-U.S. strategic relations; India-China as well as India-Pakistan relations. I will be working with Ashley Tellis, a key figure in the recent India-U.S. nuclear deal, on India-U.S. strategic relations and will be writing reports on the same.

## What are some key areas in which the U.S.-India relationship has grown?

Besides the nuclear deal, the

U.S.-India relationship is growing significantly in terms of bilateral trade of goods and services. Trade between the two countries is continuing to flourish, and companies from both countries are taking this opportunity to set up or enhance their operations in the other country. India, with its growing middle class, is a great emerging market for U.S.-based MNCs to target, while the developed market in the U.S. is a great venue for up and coming Indian giants like Infosys, Reliance, Tata, TCS, Wipro, etc. India is also serving as a great platform for the establishment of R&D centers for many companies. I believe that the nuclear deal will be followed by further collaboration between the two countries on various issues of international importance, such as UN reform, the war against terrorism, etc.

## What are some problem areas?

The U.S. and India still do not see eye-to-eye on certain trade issues. India continues to press for more concessions on the agriculture front, whereas the U.S. is urging India to pursue a more rapid path of liberalization and to further reduce tariffs and open up its markets fully. This, I believe, is one of the biggest problem areas, though leaders on both sides have realized that this issue should not prevent forward move-

ment in other areas of mutual bilateral interest.

At the same time, India continues to seek further recognition of its own war against terror that it alleges is being fueled from across the border. The U.S., however, is hesitant to take any strong action against Pakistan, which is serving it as an ally against terrorism. However, the U.S. has continued to strongly urge President [Pervez] Musharraf to take the necessary actions against any terrorist groups based in Pakistan.

## What must India do to catch up with China as a foreign investment destination?

It has been abundantly clear that the single most important thing that India needs to do is to improve its infrastructure. In addition, India needs to make its decision-making process smoother, and also learn to prevent any major hurdles in implementation once a policy decision has been made. I completely agree with Amartya Sen, who believes that there is no way India can catch up on the economic front with China if it doesn't make the right decisions as far as primary education and health care are concerned. □

*Ashish Kumar Sen is a Washington-based journalist working with The Washington Times, The Tribune and Outlook.*